

60130-1003
99MRA0015**REMARKS**

Claims 1-22 remain in the application. Claims 1, 10 and 15 have been amended and claims 21 and 22 have been added.

Claims 1 and 15 were objected to because of informalities. Applicant has amended claims 1 and 15, overcoming the Examiner's objections.

Claims 1-13 and 19-20 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious over Spurr (United States Patent Number 5,906,123) in view of Pettit (United States Patent No. 5,951,800). Claims 15-17 stand rejected as being obvious further in view of Cutler et al. (United States Patent No. 6,025,048). Spurr discloses a vehicle door latch assembly 10 including a rotatable claw 12 which coacts with a striker 14. A pawl 16 retains the claw 12 in engagement with the striker 14 to keep a door closed. The claw 12 and the pawl 16 are pivoted on a metal back plate 22 secured to the door. Pettit discloses a fiber/metal laminate 10 including a plurality of metal plies 12 which alternate with a plurality of fiber/adhesive layers 14. As disclosed in column 3, lines 16 to 20, each metal ply 12 is made of a plurality of metal sheets 16 with a metal break 18 between each sheet 16. The metal sheets 16 are spliced together to form the metal ply 12. By employing a plurality of metal sheets 16, the width of the metal ply 12 can be increased. Cutler discloses a complex hybrid ceramic matrix composite laminate 10 including ceramic layers 12 and CMC layers 14 that include fibers that can be aligned unidirectionally or multidirectionally. As disclosed in column 2, lines 5 to 10, the laminate 10 of Cutler is a high temperature, damage tolerant, thermal shock resistant, oxidation resistant, high strength laminate.

There would be no benefit to employing the spliced laminate of Pettit in the latch assembly of Spurr. The width of the laminate 10 of the metal ply 12 of Pettit is increased by splicing together the metal sheets 16. As the latch assembly 10 of Spurr includes small parts, there would be no reason to increase the width of parts of the latch assembly 10. There is no suggestion to employ the spliced together metal ply 12 of Pettit with the latch assembly 10 of Spurr, and therefore no motivation to combine. Even if unidirectional or multidirectional fibers of the complex laminate 10 of Cutler were employed in the combination, there is still no benefit to employing spliced together laminate layers in the small latch mechanism of Spurr. There is no

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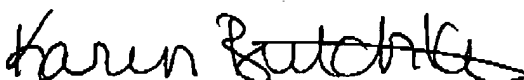
suggestion to combine these references, and the combination is improper. The rejection for obviousness is improper, and Applicant respectfully requests that it be withdrawn.

Thus, claims 1-22 are in condition for allowance. The Commissioner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 50-1482, in the name of Carlson, Gaskey & Olds, P.C. \$102.00 (1 additional dependent claim \$18.00 and 1 additional independent claim \$84.00) If any additional fees are due, the Commissioner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 50-1482, in the name of Carlson, Gaskey & Olds, P.C., for any additional fees or credit the account for any overpayment. Therefore, favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

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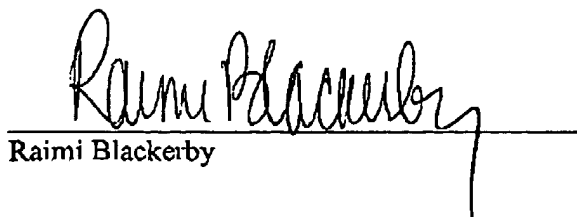
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Dated: June 14, 2002

CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office, TC3600, Before Final, 703-872-9326 on June 14, 2002.



Raimi Blackerby

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

-- CLAIMS --

Please amend the following claims as indicated:

1. (AMENDED) A vehicle door latch mechanism for releasably retaining a door comprising:

a latch bolt having a closed condition capable of retaining a striker and an open condition capable of releasing said striker;

a pawl releasably securing said latch bolt in said closed condition; and

a retention plate including at least one mouth co-operating with said latch mechanism to releasably retain said striker, [an] at least one pivot pin hole defining a pivot pin-hole surface for a pivot pin, [and at least one fixing system for fixing said latch mechanism in an operating position,] said latch bolt, said pawl and said retention plate co-operating to releasably retain said striker, and at least one of said latch bolt, said pawl and said retention plate are [is] made from a plurality of structural laminations of material.

10. (AMENDED) The latch mechanism as recited in claim 8 wherein said plurality of plate laminations co-operate to provide a [said] fixing system to secure said latch mechanism operably in an operating position.

15. (AMENDED) The latch mechanism as recited in claim 1 wherein at least one of said plurality of laminations is non homogeneous such that a strength of said lamination as measured [a] in a first direction is different from a strength of said lamination as measured in a second direction.